SPECIAL INTERACTIVE EDITION - LIVE LINKS THROUGHOUT



CONGREGATION OHEL MOSHE שבת קודש פרשת בהר-בחקתי כ״ב אייר תש״פ חזק חזק ונתחזק אהל משה היום שלושה ושישים יום שהם תשעה שבתות בבידוד.. ה' עזי ומעזי " WE REMEMBER וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת... שבע שבתות תמימות Rabbi Zvi Teichman **CONGREGATION OHEL MOSHE 2808 SMITH AVE** BALTIMORE, MD 21209 Bulletin & Announcements: Shoshana Goldberg & WWW.OHELMOSHEBALTIMORE.COM Ari Braun - Bulletin@ DAVEN@OHELMOSHEBALTIMORE.COM (410) 878-7521

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RABBI'S MESSAGE:

Musings of a Caveman

Although I am not yet a *zakein* - an old-timer, according to all *halachic* opinions, nevertheless I am definitely a senior citizen, and in the eyes of Mr. Corona I am finally 'respected' for my age as a potential and very susceptible host for his nefarious spikes.

Considering that reality, I have basically been a cave dweller, avoiding any physical contact with the outside world.

Being a caveman is not a bad thing, after all we just celebrated the life of Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai who is lauded for his having fled and sequestered himself in a cave for thirteen years, achieving remarkable greatness there.

- בְּמָעָרת צוּרִים שְׁעֲמַדְת וֹדְדָ וַהְדָרָ In rocky caves where you stopped there you acquired your glory and your strength.

In isolation one is totally removed from the normal distractions of life and able to focus more acutely, both intellectually and emotionally, gaining extraordinary knowledge and perfecting one's character.

After twelve intensive years of contemplation they emerge from the cave finding a world of men engaged in plowing, planting and reaping rather than being occupied solely with the study of Torah. They wonder how men can forsake eternal life to indulge themselves in a transient one.

A heavenly voice, fearing they seek to destroy the world with their negative attitude, instructs them to return to their cave for some more runniation.

Another year passed, and the two once again emerge from the cave. This time Rebbi Shimon is ready to accept the ways of men, but his son Rebbi Elazar is reluctant.

Until one Friday afternoon, just before the sunset was to usher in the Sabbath, they see an old man running home, his arms clutching two bunches of myrtle blossoms, who explains to them his need for two. One of them is for the heavenly command of *Zachor*, 'remember' the Sabbath to keep it holy; the other is for the second command, *Shamor*, 'observe' the Sabbath by ceasing from all creative labor.

"See how much love the Jews have for their commandments!" Rabbi Shimon exclaims, and at last his son is reconciled.

What truth did they discover during the first twelve years that lead them to demand total fealty to Torah study preferring destruction in the absence of it?

What changed in their thinking after another year of devoted study?

The Torah informs us: If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them: then I will provide your rain in their time, and the land will give its produce... I will provide peace in the land... You will pursue your enemies... I will turn My attention to you, I will make you fruiful... and I will establish My covenant with you.

It seems that the Torah is promising an idyllic life of remarkable financial, emotional, and spiritual success in reward for our devotedly adhering to the statutes of the Torah.

Yet, we all know that there is an well-known adage, "עלמא ליכא, *tere is no reward for fulfilling commandments in this temporal world*".

One approach to address this dilemma is to understand that what the Torah is conveying here is not a system of 'reward' but rather presenting a law of nature that was embedded into the very fabric of the universe. When Torah is studied and its laws fulfilled properly, the world responds naturally with all its bounty. Bacteria cannot grow in an 'environment' where Torah learning permeates the air. Adverse weather that impacts crops and commerce cannot develop in a world where the 'prevailing winds' of *mitzva* observance are present.

The verse refers here specifically to the אם בחקתי תלכו, as in *אסר בחקתי* תלכו, *four my decrees*, with the added intimation in this word which connotes something, ישר reality 'etched' and fixed - an inherent law of nature.

Perhaps it was this discovery of the exact correlation between the laws of nature and the laws of Torah that fueled Rebbi Shimon's vehement fear of the imbalance in the planet that would erupt in the absence of an unadulterated full dose of Torah learning and *mitzvah* observance.

A voice came down from Heaven informing Rebbi Shimon that he was not ready to graduate into the world quite yet.

The Talmud records a perplexing declaration Rebbi Shimon made, where he asserts that he had the ability to exempt the entire world from punishment. (סוכה מה: (

Is it that simple that a righteous sage can exonerate others from their sins without any need for authentic repentance?

Rashi in elucidating Rebbi Shimon's bold claim, states the following: בזכותי אני סובל כל האנותיהם ופוטרן מן הדיון, *mm merit I will bear their sins exempting them from judgment*.

Perhaps what Rebbi Shimon is saying is that he had the ability to see the positive in each one of them. He could 'bear' their sins and see the inherent greatness they each possessed. It was his unique talent to see the beautiful mosaic of *Klall Yisroel*, seeing their radiance and not their flaws, that gave them the credibility to infuse the natural order of the world with divine purpose, justifying its flourishing existence.

בָר יוֹחָאי, נְמִשְׁחְתָ אָשְׁרִידָּ, שְׁכֵּו שְׁשׁוֹן מֵחֵבְרְדָ Bar Yochai! You were anointed you are fortunate with oil of joy from your fellows.

The Chassidic masters cleverly interpret the first half of this refrain 'you are fortunate' not as a praise bestowed upon Rebbi Shimon but rather as describing Rebbi Shimon who was anointed with the ability to describe every situation in life with an expression to himself: 'You are fortunate', no matter what came his way.

אשריך can alternately mean you are 'praiseworthy'.

Perhaps Rebbi Shimon exulted to whomever he encountered, "you are praiseworthy", because he saw that greatness in everyone, and held out eternal hope they would reach their potential.

Like Rebbi Shimon, we have been given the opportunity to contemplate the existence of the world and the vital role each one of us plays, in powering it and its blessings, perforce our unique contribution.

When we do what is right, the world responds with its inherent goodness. It is a consequence not a reward.

Sometimes though we upset the apple cart by striving for unnatural goals and suffer the resulting imbalance of our universe.

During my caveman mode I have been taking an unscientific survey. I've been polling parents about the quality of their relationship with their children now that they are spending so much more time and energy with them. Has their relationship been tested, or has it deepened?

For the most part it has been enhanced. But one parent shared with me a remarkable observation.

Her youngest child who had not been talking much has suddenly transformed into a chatterbox now that his mother is spending so much more time with him, and his siblings are home stimulating him in ways that weren't possible before. Another child who had been treated for attention deficits no longer needs it and is thriving and genuinely calm and hapy the entire day.

We have corrupted the original 'natural' order of family life; where mothers were mothers, toddlers weren't in day care; and children were taught ideally by parents themselves and not inundated with unnaturally long school days and placed in the trust of others.

We have returned to a semblance of 'primal normalcy', and the anxieties we have 'created' are disappearing naturally.

There is much to ponder. Soon we will be summoned from our caves. The question that remains will be: how much are we willing to reorder our lives to be in total consonance with its reality?

If we succeed, we will be able to look at ourselves and others, expressing wholeheartedly, "you are fortunate, you are praiseworthy", unleashing the bounty of blessings that await those who live in total sync with the primal will of our Creator.

באהבה, צבי יהודה טייכמאן



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 350,000

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TOTAL PLEDGES: \$423,724.15 COLLECTED FROM PAYMENT SCHEDULES: \$312,432.24

Figures reflect new pledges, lump sum gifts and payment plan installments toward the Phase III Fundraising Goal of \$999,999

To learn more or get involved in this exciting project contact The Building Committee at building@ohelmoshebaltimore.com or talk to Rocky Caine, Noki Ganz, Joel Gedalius, Yoni Herman, Chaim Meister, Azi Rosenblum or Moshe Meir Rubin!

IIIHAPPY ME BIRTHDAY III

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IIIHAPPY ANNIVERSARYIII

Moshe & Ilana Grosberg, Shalom & Pessy Michael

IIIBAR/BAT MITZVAH COMING UP SOON(ish)III Dovid Leichter (Bereshis)

To have your child's upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah listed here please email fice@ohelmoshebaltimore.com with details and/or update your member profile

YAHRZEIT

Elisheva Rabinowitz, for her mother, Harriette Gray Hentsha bas Melech

> Yonah Cohen, for his father, Dale Cohen ישראל דוד בן משה הכהן

Members: Please keep your profile updated in Shul Cloud so we can celebrate and commemorate all our important dates with you! (And occasionally save you from forgetting one!!)

VIRTUALLY AWESOME SHUL PHOTOS



What lesson did Rebbi Shimon learn that placated him from his prior fear?